



Moving Nature Tourism Forward in the Pine Mountain Region

*Executive Summary of the Pine
Mountain Ecotourism
Roundtable
August 25, 2003*

The Pine Mountain region of southeastern Kentucky holds great promise and opportunity to further support nature tourism. The recent passage of a bill to create the 120-mile long Pine Mountain Trail State Park and numerous other attractions including the Pine Mountain Settlement School, Blanton Old-Growth Forest, Kentucky Coal Mining Museum, Little Shepherd Trail and the Pine Mountain State Resort Park offers unique tourism adventures vested in the region's heritage, biodiversity, environment, culture, aesthetics and unique sense of place.

The Ky. Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) and the Pine Mountain Settlement School convened a roundtable in Harlan County on Nov. 8, 2002 to bring together state, local and community leaders to generate ideas about how to move nature tourism forward in the region. This white paper is a summary of ideas and recommendations that emerged from a roundtable discussion. Sixty people including 2 cabinet secretaries, state agency officials, mayors, county judges-executive, state legislators, local and regional tourism directors, business owners, as well as bankers, heritage officials and natural resource managers attended the roundtable.

Advancing tourism in the region will require leadership, partnerships, collaboration and networking. Roundtable members agreed that the Pine Mountain region could serve as a model to build a regional nature tourism initiative across four counties and three area development districts. To accomplish this, it is recommended that a Pine Mountain Nature Tourism Initiative be pursued to include the following:

- Creation of a regional leadership group (alliance, council, nonprofit organization) to develop a common vision and identity for the region, coordinate development efforts and serve as a support group to advance tourism in the Pine Mountain region.
- Development of a strategic plan to define the region, inventory resources, identify potential markets and evaluate development needs, assess funding and investment opportunities and establish goals, priorities and actions.
- Targeting investment and resources to focus on critical infrastructure and support needs and promote cooperative venture partnerships in the region to build a strong nature tourism economy.

This Whitepaper is intended to promote additional discussion and consideration of opportunities to strengthen nature tourism in the region. We believe local leadership should drive a Pine Mountain Nature Tourism Initiative. However, it would be appropriate for the state to commit services

Roundtable Members

Nancy Adams, Ex. Director
Pine Mt. Settlement School

Leslie Cole, Ex. Director
Environmental Quality Comm. (EQC)

Elizabeth Rudd Bennett
Vice-Chair, EQC

Robert L. Riddle
Commissioner, EQC

Patty Wallace
Commissioner, EQC

Jean M. Dorton
Commissioner, EQC

Bob Mitchell, District Administrator
Representative Hal Rogers' Office

Henry C. List, Secretary
Ky. Natural Resources and
Environmental Protection Cabinet

Ann Latta, Secretary
Ky. Tourism Development Cabinet

Carole Summers
Ky. Dept. of Travel

Rick Fuller, Manager
Kingdom Come State Park

Lee Carolan
Ky. Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

Bill Moore
Ky. Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

Don Dott, Director
Ky. Nature Preserves Commission

Ewell Balltrip, Ex. Director
Ky. Appalachian Commission

Judy Duerson
Cumberland Valley ADD

Morgan Jones
Ky. Wild Rivers Program

D. Todd Littlefield, Analyst
Legislative Research Commission

James Funk, Forest Program Manager
Division of Forestry

James "Buddy" Farson,
Division of Forestry

in the form of staff and technical assistance to help initially support a regional leadership group including:

- Enlisting other state entities such as universities, community colleges and area development districts to provide support and assistance to the regional leadership group.
- Assisting the leadership group with tourism development, planning and marketing.
- Coordinating, targeting and leveraging of existing state resources to build the nature tourism sector in the region.
- Support for funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission to support a strategic plan for the region

It is the commission's hope that Eastern Kentucky can tap the full potential that the nature tourism market has to offer and that the Pine Mountain region can serve as a state model for sustainable growth and environmental conservation. To view the whitepaper visit www.kyeqc.net.

Roundtable Members . . . continued

Senator Daniel Mongiardo Senate District 17	Jim Hayes, Director Horse Lick Creek BioReserve	Al Fritsch, Director Appal. Science in the Public Interest
Representative Brandon Smith House District 84	Karen Engle, Ex. Director PRIDE	Joyce Frasher Louisa City Council
Joe Grieshop Judge Ex. Harlan County	Janet Bridges, Asst. Director PRIDE	Earl Williams Harlan, KY
Mayor Daniel Howard Harlan	Kathleen Lancaster, Exec. Director Kentucky Natural Lands Trust	Barbara Ayers Tri-City Chamber of Commerce
Carroll Smith Judge Ex. Letcher County	Sally Thilman MACED	Rick Brock Environmental & Energy Services
Mayor Thomas Vicini Lynch, KY	Jerry Rickett, President/CEO Ky. Highlands Investment Corporation	Dennis Dorton, CEO Citizen's National Bank
Mary Jeanne Packer Fermata Inc.	Betty Cole Arts, Crafts and Tourism Program Ky. Communities Economic Opportunity Council	Beth Hutchinson UK Landscape Architecture Student
Susan Patton, Treasurer Ky. Heritage Conservation Fund	Terina L. Widner-Collins Tri-Cities Main Street Director Cumberland, Benham and Lynch	Jeff Spradling, Assistant Director The Appalachian Center, Un. of Ky.
Sheila Kuczko, Director Southern & Eastern Ky. Tourism Development Assn.	Ross Kegan, Vice President Black Mountain Resources	Robert Gipe, Appalachian Program Southeast Community College
Karen Phillips, Executive Director Harlan Co. Tourism Comm.	Gayle Borders, Director Benham School House Inn	Bruce Ayers, President Southeast Community College
Kim Collier, Executive Director Cumberland Tourism Comm.	Andy Jones Harlan, KY	James Harding, Assistant Professor Parks and Recreation, Union College
Bobbie Gothard, Curator Ky. Coal Museum	Dania & Rick Egedi Sheltowee Trace Outfitters	Andy Messer, Director of Outdoor Programming, Union College
Marcheta L. Sparrow, President/CEO Ky. Tourism Council	Ernest Smith, Board President Harlan Co. Conservation District	Warren Parish Harlan Daily Enterprise
Shad Baker Pine Mt. Trail Conference		